

SafeRoutes

National Center for Safe Routes to School



A Swift Response to a Growing Demand for Safe Routes to School

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NATIONAL CENTER
FOR SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



Increasing a child's ability to walk and bike to school became a national priority when legislation was signed into law August 2005 that provides funding for Safe Routes to School programs. This legislation also paved the way for the establishment of a national organization to assist programs across the country. Established in May 2006, the National Center for Safe Routes to School recognized the immediate need for quality information and set an ambitious start-up agenda.

Building upon the groundswell of support for Safe Routes to School across the country, the National Center for Safe Routes to School (NCSRTS) kicked off its first year of operation with several key accomplishments. The Center aimed high in its effort to build capacity and create demand for Safe Routes to School programs.



MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF ESTABLISHMENT



Launched a comprehensive NCSRTS Web site

Coordinated the first Safe Routes to School State Coordinators National Meeting

Developed a Web-based Safe Routes to School Library

Launched a database of over 145 SRTS-related technical questions and answers

Secured media coverage in several major media outlets, including the Chicago Tribune, the Baltimore Sun and USA Today

Arranged promotional opportunities with Lands' End and Walk4Life

Developed standardized national tools for collecting school trip data and parent attitudes

Delivered eight local and four state-level formats of the SRTS National Course

Promoted International Walk to School Day/Month within the US and abroad, resulting in a 100 percent increase in local media coverage received

Received a record number of registered schools for Walk to School Day (2202)

Established a technical assistance toll free number (1-866-610-SRTS)

Assigned NCSRTS liaisons to State Coordinators for technical assistance

Set up the SRTS State Coordinators' listserv

Established the James L. Oberstar Safe Routes to School Award



“ I am so honored that the National Center has recognized my efforts to enhance children’s health through the benefits of increased exercise. If this award calls more attention to positive ways to reduce childhood obesity and promote a healthier lifestyle, that is the greatest gift of all. ”

— Congressman James L. Oberstar, Eighth District of Minnesota

ABOUT THE FEDERAL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Through the 2005 passage of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), Congress designated a total of \$612 million toward developing the National Safe Routes to School Program. The Program provides funds to the States to substantially improve the ability of primary and middle school students to walk and bicycle to school safely.

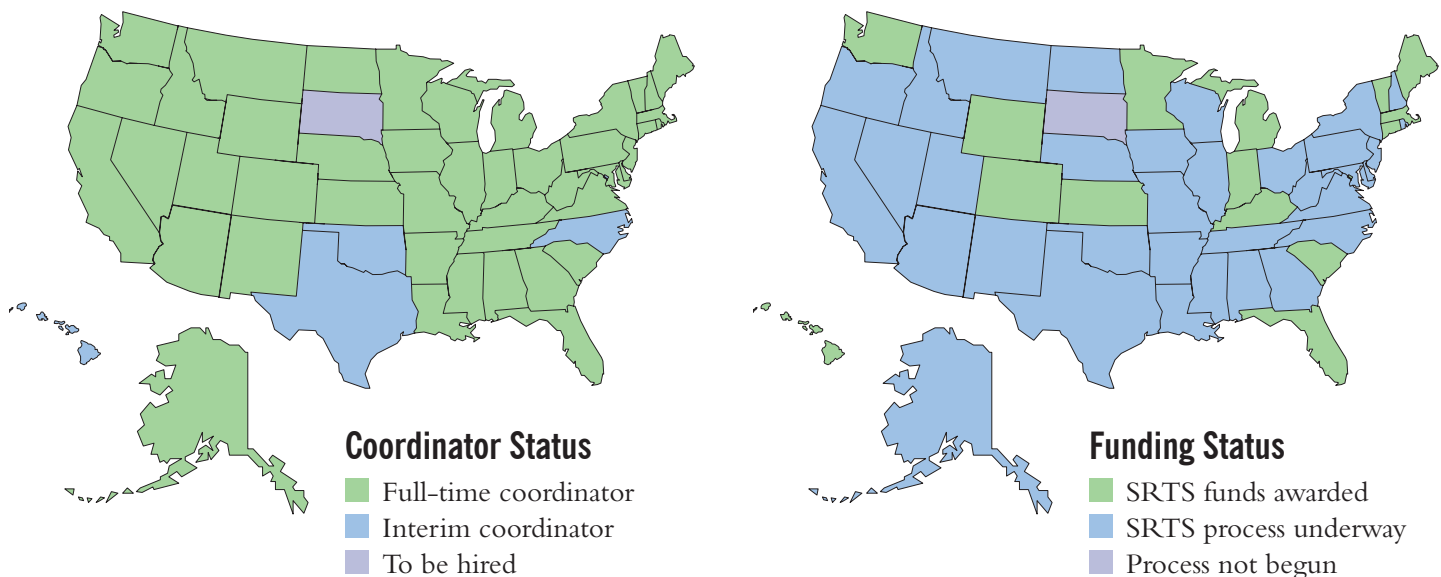
Each State administers its own program and develops its own procedures to solicit and select projects for funding. The program establishes two distinct types of funding opportunities: infrastructure projects, such as engineering improvements, and non-infrastructure related activities, such as education, enforcement and encouragement programs.

Under the Federal Safe Routes to School Program, each State is responsible for hiring a full-time Safe Routes to School coordinator to implement a SRTS statewide program. As of the beginning of 2007, 45 states had hired a full-time coordinator, 5 states had hired an interim coordinator and 1 state had not yet hired a coordinator.

For more information on the Federal Safe Routes to School Program, please visit <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/index.htm>.

SNAPSHOT FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The National Center for Safe Routes to School produces a monthly Program Status Report that offers a snapshot of State SRTS programs.



As of the beginning of 2007:

- 16 states have announced funding for local or statewide SRTS activities
- Approximately \$17.6 million has been spent or committed for SRTS programs
- Nearly 300 schools are participating in state-funded SRTS programs
- 50 of 51 states (including D.C.) have SRTS programs in various stages of progress



SPREADING THE WORD

Through a variety of promotional materials and media relations activities, the Center has set out to answer two fundamental questions regarding the program: What is Safe Routes to School? and Why is it so important? NCSRTS developed a series of promotional materials for use at the national, state and local level.

The Center also distributed six news releases since its launch to announce such newsworthy items as the launch of the NCSRTS Web site and the establishment of the James L. Oberstar Safe Routes to School Award. The Center has been featured in major media outlets, including USA Today, AOL News and the Baltimore Sun.

NCSRTS also worked to arm SRTS State Coordinators with tools to market their program at the state level. The Center developed a Web-based system that allowed State Coordinators the ability to customize promotional materials with their own information.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS AVAILABLE AT WWW.SAFEROUTESINFO.ORG/RESOURCES:



Informational flier to give a general overview of SRTS

Tips Sheet Series on topics such as working with the media, how to hold a news conference and promoting a SRTS program

Template news releases for SRTS programs and Walk to School events

Flash video on Safe Routes to School accessible from the Web site homepage

Talking points about Safe Routes to School issues

Walk to School public service announcements

National Center for Safe Routes to School logos

FORMING PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE

The National Center for Safe Routes to School extended its promotional reach through the development of co-promotional partnerships with cataloguer Lands' End and Walk4Life Pedometers.

Working with Lands' End, the Center secured 600 high visibility backpacks to use as promotional giveaways during Pro Walk, Pro Bike conference. In addition, the Center secured 1000 backpacks to use for weekly drawings and grand prize winners for registered Walk to School events. The Center also worked with Lands' End to promote Walk to School Day to its customer base and the news media.

The Center continued an existing partnership with Walk4Life pedometers. The Center secured weekly giveaways and a grand prize drawing for registered Walk to School events.



EXPANDING INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

On October 4, 2006, a record number of communities from all 50 US states participated in International Walk to School Day. Over 2,200 events were registered on the USA Walk to School Web site. Of these registered events, 48 percent reported that their Walk to School event was a part of an ongoing walking and/or biking program.

SRTS programs are spreading as a result of Walk to School events. In 2006, a survey of Walk to School organizers revealed an increase in the proportion of schools currently implementing SRTS programs (22 percent) compared to 2004 (18 percent) or 2005 (17 percent). At the same time, the survey showed a considerable decrease in the proportion of respondents that have not heard of SRTS programs (17 percent) compared to previous years (34 percent in 2004 and 2005).

The 2006 event marked the establishment of October as International Walk to School Month. On a global scale, the 2006 event saw a record 40 participating countries.

The Center also made great strides in offering communities valuable promotional materials to build their events. The Center expanded customizable media and marketing materials offered to event organizers through the Web site including a template local news release, talking points, proclamations and public service announcements.

For more information on International Walk to School events, including communities that participated and event photos, please visit the USA Web site at www.walktoschool.org.



WEB RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The National Center for Safe Routes to School developed several new Web-based technical assistance tools to help communities with their Safe Routes to School programs. With the launch of the Center's new Web site, SRTS program leaders now have access to a comprehensive Online reference manual, an Online Library of SRTS materials and a searchable "Question and Answer" database.



Safe Routes to School Guide

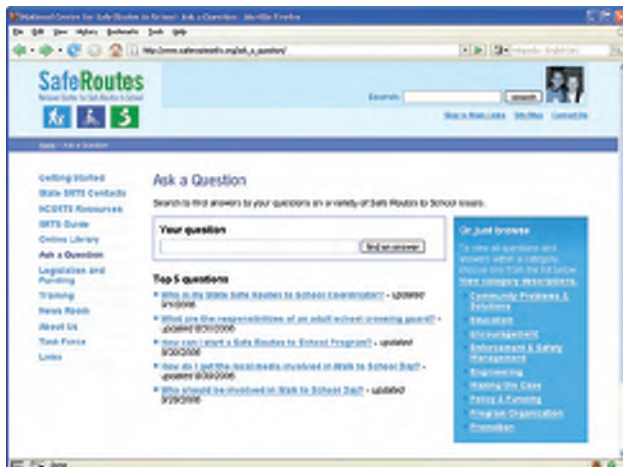
www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide

A comprehensive online reference manual designed to support communities in developing Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs. Modules include Introduction to SRTS, Steps to Creating a SRTS Program, Engineering, Enforcement, Encouragement and Education, Student Drop off and Pick up and Case Studies. An Evaluation module will be completed by winter 2007.

Online Library

www.saferoutesinfo.org/online_library

Contains a Web-based collection of Safe Routes to School-related materials and documents compiled by practitioners and program leaders. Users can search by keyword, category or type as well as upload their own Safe Routes to School materials.



"Ask a Question"

www.saferoutesinfo.org/ask_a_question

Includes over 145 technical questions and answers relating to Safe Routes to School. Web site users may also review the top questions asked and search through the questions using a keyword or category. If users do not find their answer within the database, there is also a mechanism for them to submit a question to NCSRTS.



NCSRTS Resources Section

www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources

Includes resources developed by the Center including evaluation forms, marketing materials and other program resources.

News Room

www.saferoutesinfo.org/news_room

Includes program news releases and recent news articles pertaining to Safe Routes to School. The News Room will also house the SRTS electronic newsletter.

TAKING MEASURE OF SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

The National Center for Safe Routes to School has taken steps to evaluate the effectiveness of Safe Routes to School and to answer questions such as “How many kids walk or bike to school?”

In an effort to collect national-level data, the Center has developed standardized forms for the collection of student travel data and parental attitudes about students traveling to and from school. Using this information, the Center will be able to establish baseline information from which program elements will be evaluated.

To access the forms, which are also available in Spanish, please visit the NCSRTS Resources Section at www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources.

BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH TRAINING

Building upon the Safe Routes to School National Course developed by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, NCSRTS works to train communities in creating sound programs that are based on community conditions, best practices and responsible use of resources.

To support capacity building efforts by SRTS State Coordinators, NCSRTS committed to providing a free training or promotional service of equal value to every state. Thus far, Coordinators have requested state-level course delivery, either for state-level stakeholders or for communities that have received state funds. Other states have opted to build a team of instructors to teach the course in their states.


SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL STATE COORDINATORS NATIONAL MEETING

The NCSRTS organized the first Annual Safe Routes to School State Coordinators National Meeting held in Washington D.C. from July 31, 2006, through August 2, 2006. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information to the newly appointed State Coordinators and a venue for networking. A keynote address was presented by The Honorable James L. Oberstar, U.S. Congressman from the Eighth District of Minnesota and Congressional sponsor of the Federal Safe Routes to School program.

A total of 74 registered participants attended the meeting, including 41 SRTS State Coordinators or their designee, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, America Walks, the Federal Highway Administration, the Governors Highway Safety Association, the League of American Bicyclists, the National Center for Bicycling and Walking, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership.

The second Annual Safe Routes to School State Coordinators National Meeting will be held in the spring of 2007 in Colorado and will include a session on the local programs already in place.





Sign up for email alerts at
www.saferoutesinfo.org/signup to receive:

Safe Routes Matters, the Center's e-newsletter

Monthly Program Status Reports

News Releases

General Updates

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Center will continue its efforts to build capacity and create demand for Safe Routes to School programs across the country. Major future accomplishments will include:

Adding an Evaluation module to the Safe Routes to School Guide

Selecting and presenting the James L. Oberstar Safe Routes to School Award

Beginning development of a Safe Routes to School image campaign, including radio and print public service announcements

Establishing the SRTS National Review Group

Developing a data collection system using existing standardized tools to evaluate Safe Routes to School programs at the local, state and national level

Working with WALK21, the International Conference on Walking, to develop a day-long Safe Routes to School Workshop to be held in conjunction with its 2007 meeting in Toronto, Canada

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report covers work performed by the National Center for Safe Routes to School between May 2006 and December 2006. Established in May 2006, the National Center for Safe Routes to School assists communities in enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bike to school. With funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, the NCSRTS is maintained by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center and its partners the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, America Walks, the Governor's Highway Safety Association, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, and Toole Design Group.